



ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥



INTERNATIONAL SATELLITE CHANNEL
UNDER AKAL TAKHAT-A TOOL FOR
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—Jagdeep Kaur Ahluwalia

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PREFACE

The first three articles 'International Satellite Channel under Akal Takhat—A tool for reconciliation,' 'Fresh look at sikh educational institutions—Need to establish a centralised organisation' and 'Establishment of think tank under Akal Takhat' have been written by Smt. Jagdeep Kaur Ahluwalia. She is a social worker and has suggested setting up of Secretariate for Shri Akal Takhat. She has also enumerated various activities which can be taken up by Jathedar of Shri Akal Takhat such as having a think tank under Shri Akal Takhat which can serve a very useful purpose in the furtherance of the aims and objects of Sikhism. The fourth article 'Prerna'—A small step towards 'Spiritual Socialism' is written by Miss. Hardeep Kaur. Guru Nanak Dev Mission is grateful to Smt. Jagdeep Kaur Ahluwalia and Miss Hardeep Kaur for permitting the Mission to publish these articles as tract of the Mission.

Guru Nanak Dev Mission
Patiala

INTERNATIONAL SATELLITE CHANNEL UNDER AKAL TAKHAT- A TOOL FOR RECONCILIATION

1. Need for Dis- semination of message of Guru Granth Sahib

As in ancient Indian scriptures and in Guru Granth Sahib, Bhai Gurdas, a philosopher-saint and relative of Guru Arjan, had also accepted the cyclical division of time into four 'yugas' based on the behavioural pattern of the people. 'In Satya yuga' people were truthful and lived according to a strict moral code, hence no divine assistance was required for achieving the highest spiritual goal of 'Moksha' or salvation. However, as the conduct of the people had started sliding downhill, in the next two 'Yugas' namely 'Treta' and 'Duapar', divine intervention became necessary to guide people to the path of rectitude. In the present 'Yuga' i.e. 'Kalyuga', the conduct of the people has reached the bottom of a chasm and in words of Bhai Gurdas, 'winds of hatred are lashing the world and the 'sin', having become a major force, has accelerated the decay of human beings due to self-inflicted moral, spiritual and environmental pollution of the world. Like the pieces of bamboo catching fire when rubbed against each other, people have started burning in the fire of mutual jealousy and have started criticising the scriptures and holy books. In the prevalent darkness and despondency, none is

able to appreciate the truth, that without the help of Guru's word, it will not be possible for the humanity to cross ocean of falsehood and reach the shores of divinity and 'Godhead' (Var 1, paud 17). As God loves His creation and wants to help the humanity to be in a state of bliss (Anand), He has sent great prophets/saviours like Buddha, Mahavira, Jesus Christ, Mohammad and Ten Gurus in the short period of more than five thousand years of Kaliyuga. As the life of the current 'yuga' is considerable and people can save themselves from the trough of despondency by their own efforts with the guidance and grace of a Guru. The revealed truth was written in the Granth Sahib and its stature was raised from a mere scripture to perpetual Guru by Guru Gobind Singh. When a Guru is not in human form but in Book form, people can communicate with him only by raising their intellectual, moral & spiritual level to the level of the authors of the scripture. Unlike other scriptures Guru Granth Sahib is a unique scripture as it was authenticated by the Gurus themselves and its message was made universal by including the hymns of Muslims, Hindu and other saints in it. If the social, moral and religious strains existing at the threshold of 21st Century are analysed then the need for dissemination of message of 'truth', 'love', 'universal brotherhood', 'welfare of all' and 'Fatherhood of One God' enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib becomes obvious.

2. Actual situation at the threshold of 21st Cen- A cursory look at the existing scenario on the planet earth shows, that, the situation visualised by Bhai Gurdas at the time of renewal

ture.

of centuries, appears to be uncannily similar to the one in existence at the threshold of 21st Century. Hatred, jealousy, selfishness, exploitation and distrust among various streams of civilisation have brought the planet to the brink of destruction. Briefly speaking, following major streams of civilisation are conflicting among themselves and unless saving grace of a Guru intervenes, the world is likely to become a hell-a planet fit for devils only.

Western Stream

(a) Despite the differences of nationality, language and religion, the civilisation unity of Western Europe and North America can not be denied. Excepting large Red-Indian elements in Latin American population, there is no other distinguishing mark for treating Latin America as a separate civilisation. Similarly Australia & New Zealand are covered under the umbrella of Western Civilisation. However, existence of tensions among various members of this stream can not be denied. Its attempt to establish its supremacy in the World is not liked by others.

Post-Soviet Russian Stream

(b) The debate over Westernisation vs. Russianisation (i.e. modernisation without Westernisation) is yet not over. This shows, that, Russia is still not regarded as a part of the Western World. As the ideological division of Europe has disappeared, cultural division of Europe between Western Christianity on one hand and Orthodox Christianity and Islam, on the other hand, has re-emerged in the Post-Soviet Scenario.

Islamic Stream

(c) Industrialism, free market economy and even liberal democracy has not changed a Muslim

into a Westerner. On the contrary, religious conversion marks a break with old cultural tradition and changes one's whole existence. It is on this character of changes of religious faith, that, the Muslim drive for Islamisation of world rests. The Islamic revivalists strongly and sincerely believe, that, if they can defeat the powerful West, the rest of World will be falling at their feet.

Chinese & Japanese Stream (d) The ancient Chinese and Japanese Buddhist Civilisational streams are changing their courses to meet the challenges of 21st Century and as the World shrinks further due to technological advances, their conflicts with Western and Islamic Civilisational trends and among themselves would be becoming acute.

Indian Stream (e) The ancient Indian Civilisation based on the principles of tolerance & co-existence among the different religions & cultures, is subtly undergoing changes on account of impact of other civilisational tendencies existing on the planet earth. At present, India is a part of a subcontinent and its surrounding islands and this area, apart from India, contains two major Muslim countries, two Buddhist countries and one overwhelmingly Hindu country. India have got Muslim, Christian and Sikh minorities. The Muslims are a majority in J&K, while the Sikhs are a majority in the Punjab and the Christians in some of the small states of North-east. Tensions have emerged among various religions, linguistic and ethnic groups residing in India. This civilisational stream is also not at peace with other streams.

3. Effect of Western Civilisation and the conflict among various civilisations.

Many observers note, that, economic modernisation of the world based on capitalistic virtues like trade, profit, free market economy, globalisation and consumerism, has created social tensions and thereby people around the world are being torn apart from their local identities. This is tending to weaken the nation states as provider of a satisfying identity. In much of the world, religion has moved in to fill this gap, often in the form of fundamentalist movements. In the past two or three centuries, the economic, industrial, technological and scientific power of the West and therefore, its military capacity had outstripped the capacity of the Islamic, Chinese, Japanese and Indian Civilisations. The confrontation between the Western civilisation and others has now moved from the historical, religious and military levels to the intellectual level and this confrontation is likely to dominate the scenario of initial part of the 21st century.

4. How to avoid confrontation among civilisations & effective means of dissemination of message of love.

In ancient times, before the art of writing was discovered, architecture was the only effective means of communicating ideas of love, universal brotherhood and unity of Godhead. As everybody could not visit the architectural sites or understand the style and design of building, the message could not reach a large number of people. After the art of writing was discovered, the message could be conveyed by writing with hand. However, invention of printing press helped in the spread of education and enabled the people to understand and appreciate the message of truth enshrined in scriptures. With the advent of radio, television, computer and satellite communication, the desire and time to

read books would be lacking and therefore the message of love and reconciliation based on the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib and other scriptures will have to be given in modern idiom and style by using latest technological advances. It is relevant to observe, that, launching of satellites in space has brought a sea change in the communication field, because, with the help of geo-stationary satellites, television programmes can be seen throughout the world. This tool in the hands of wrong people can increase confrontation among people by spreading the fire of hatred, misunderstanding and placing undue emphasis on the pleasures of flesh by ignoring spiritual and moral values. As suggested in another article, Akal Takhat must come forward and assume spiritual leadership of the people in the next century. A satellite channel in the hands of Akal Takhat will be a tool of reconciliation and love while in commercial hands only a tool for earning profit without caring to save future generations from self inflicted moral suicide.

5. How the Satellite channel will be a tool of reconciliation ? A satellite channel under the general supervision of Akal Takhat, either as an organ of International Secretariat or a private Corporation, would be in a position to provide pure entertainment and give the following messages from Guru Granth Sahib :

(a) Uniqueness of Guru Granth Sahib as it contains hymns not only of Gurus but of saints belonging to other religions and different parts of the country. It is the only secular-religious scripture in the world and its authenticity is beyond suspicion or doubt.

- (b) Qualities of a true Hindu or a true Muslim or a true Sikh or a true Human being as indicated in the Granth.
- (c) Details of scientific knowledge and its correctness and relevance to the future.
- (d) Explanation of hymns with the help of audio-visual aids.
- (e) Emphasis on good health & education in the light of Guru's teaching.
- (f) How to be a house holder and yet detached from worldly pleasures and 'live pure amidst the impurities of the world'.
- (g) Message of unity of Godhead, universal brotherhood, spiritual socialism for saving planet earth from all types of pollutions-moral, spiritual, social, political and environmental.
- (h) Solutions for the problems of people living in different parts of world so that greatest happiness of greatest number could be ensured.
- (i) Pure & healthy entertainment.
- (j) Checking the spread of disinformation.
- (k) Preparing programmes after getting inspiration from the lives of Gurus and other saints and telecasting them.
- (l) Popularising the moral Code of Conduct and 'Rehat' through interesting programmes.
- (m) Telecasting and teaching 'Kirtan' and music.
- (n) Translating hymns and Guru's words in major languages of the world and telecasting in the idiom which non-Punjabi people of the world understand.

(o) Teaching comparative religion and pointing out how Guru Granth Sahib has got latest revealed truth & hence it is relevant for modern times.

6. Conclusion After Gurudom in human form was abolished by Guru Gobind Singh, it was ordained, that, spiritual & moral guidance should be taken from Guru Granth Sahib and Guru Panth was made responsible for ensuring, that, the correct message of Guru gets properly disseminated by using suitable means. In the modern times satellite communication and television are best means for spreading message of love, universal brotherhood, welfare of all, spiritual socialism and unity of God and it is hoped, that, establishing an international satellite of the type suggested earlier would serve as a giant step towards reconciling various streams of civilisation and establishing the kingdom of God on the entire planet.

FRESH LOOK AT SIKH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS NEED TO ESTABLISH A CENTRALISED ORGANISATION

Chief Aim of an Educational Institutions in 21st Century

The chief aim of education should be to develop a 'perfect person' in accordance with the teachings of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, so that, the challenges of 21st Century could be successfully met and greatest happiness of greatest number could be achieved. The Guru expects a person to be a spiritual socialist who believes in 'Fatherhood of One God', 'Universal Brotherhood' and 'Welfare of all' and organises his life on the cardinal principles of 'Nam Japna', 'Dharam di Kirat Karni' and 'Vand Chhkna' i.e. 'meditation on One God', 'Honest Labour' and 'Sharing with needy'. Education should develop love of excellence in a student and should develop his intellectual, physical and spiritual capabilities to optimum level. In short, education should enable a person like a lotus flower to remain pure amidst the impurities of world, so that, his fragrance and good deeds help the planet earth to become a veritable heaven where people of different hues and colour make the World a garden of Eden, beautified by different variety of flowers.

Role of an Educationist

For having a bumper crop of perfect persons in next Century, an educationist should have wisdom and common sense of an agriculturist. He should ensure, that, field of youth is

properly prepared by creating congenial environment in school and healthy seeds of good ideas are sown and irrigated with love of humanity, deweeding of evil is done regularly and eating and spoiling of saplings of youth by animals of false ideas is prevented by having hedge of faith around the field of God's own children. As child is father of man, an educationist will have to take care of young children, so that, future scholars, scientists, economists, professionals, spiritual and political leaders bring out a sea change in the style of living of people in the next Century and a welfare society comes into existence.

**Present state of
Sikh Educational
Institutes**

At present, the Sikh educational institutes are breeding ground of mediocrity in all fields of life. The sorry state of these institutions is due to following factors :

- (a) lack of professionalism in recruiting teachers, staff and admitting students.
- (b) poor management techniques and absence of audit organisation;
- (c) failure to conserve scarce financial resources for getting optimum results;
- (d) lack of will to adopt new methods for improving educational standards, sports and moral education;
- (e) failure to hold seminars and refresher courses for teachers and thus preventing them from learning and adopting of new educational techniques for teaching children;
- (f) absence of vocational education for students which prevents them from becoming self reliant & self-employed;

(g) failure to organise genuine competitions in sports, education and spiritual matters and thus preventing development of excellence in children and youth;

(h) failure to carry out research for developing new techniques for teaching;

(i) failure of the teachers to indicate the relevance of teachings of Gurus to modern world by using modern idiom and audiovisual aids;

(j) failure to meet challenges of permissive society by adopting modern techniques for developing moral, ethical and spiritual values in youth.

Fresh Look

To have a fresh look at the educational institutions, it would be necessary to appoint an enquiry committee having an administrator, educationist and financial expert to find out reasons for poor performance and for highlighting steps for rejuvenating existing sick institutions.

Agenda for the Committee

The agenda for the enquiry committee would be as under :

(a) to study and analyse infrastructural weaknesses responsible for continuous failure of the institutions in producing competent persons who could remove the general environment of indifference and incompetence and to suggest ways to make the institutions healthy and useful instruments for ushering in renaissance and reformation in 21st Century;

(b) to suggest proper personnel management and recruitment policy for teachers, so that, institutions are run professionally;

- (c) to study existing curriculum of studies and suggest improvement thereof on the basis of latest ideas in advanced countries;
- (d) to suggest introduction of vocational education, so that, full employment could be ensured in near future;
- (e) to suggest steps for producing world standard sportpersons, scientists and other professionals;
- (f) suggest methods to streamline internal audit, information system and other procedures for improving overall efficiency of the institutions by making them financially viable;
- (g) to suggest establishment of Central Organisation for coordinating the activities of institutions managed by the S.G.P.C., the D.G.P.C., Chief Khalsa Dewan and other foundations. This organisation will help in maintaining uniform standards by professionally recruiting teachers & staff and selecting students on merits. It will develop R&D for improving educational policies and ensuring uniformity in curriculum.

Conclusion

By having a fresh look on existing Sikh institutions and establishing a Central Organisation, educational standards are bound to improve and thus Guru's intention to have perfect persons for serving humanity and realising God, will be realised in near future.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THINK TANK UNDER AKAL TAKHT

1. Renewal of cycle of Centuries & cataclysmic changes.

When the cycle of centuries renews, sea change occurs due to the activities of the seers, prophets, scientists and explorers. At the turn of the fifteenth century, explorers like Columbus and Vasco-da-Gama embarked on the voyage which ultimately led to exploitation and enslavement of other people while Guru Nanak travelled not only in India but also in Iraq, Afghanistan, Tibet, China and Sri Lanka to spiritually liberate the humanity and establish a cooperative society. Before the turn of sixteenth century, a unique scripture containing hymns of Ramanand from South, Jaidev, from East, Kabir and Ravidas from Central India, Farid and Guru Nanak from West, was compiled and enshrined at Harimandar Sahib, Amritsar. Similarly, remarkable cataclysm like Industrial, French, Russian Revolutions and creation of Khalsa occurred when other centuries renewed themselves. Similar changes are also expected in the beginning of 21st Century.

2. Establishment of think tank under the guidance of Akali Takhat Secretariat,

At the threshold of 21st Century, humanity appears to be at cross roads, because, the moral values which were serving as beacon light have slowly crumbled and most of the people feel lost and confused in the whirlwind of materialism. To improve the prevalent situation, the Akali Takhat should establish a think tank of the original thinkers who could

churn the 'ocean of wisdom and knowledge' for discovering 'water of immortality' i. e. amrit, afresh for rejuvenating the mankind and guiding the humanity to prevent avoidable depredation of planet earth and to help the Secretariat at Amritsar (suggested in another article), to help the human beings to develop themselves, physically, intellectually, morally and spiritually for achieving largest happiness for the largest number of people.

3. New Orientation for thinkers, scholars It is imperative, that, in the proposed think tank adequate facilities are provided for scholars and thinkers and original orientation is given to their learning with the aim of discovering and activating creative avenues whereby a living discourse with the world at large could become a reality for our people. For this, the first and the most important thing is, that, the scholars should be enabled to re-educate themselves as to the true nature of our roots, and next to share their discovery of 'the roots' with the people in their own language both in order to enlighten them as well as to authenticate their own formulations. This requires an atmosphere of pure learning free from the rat-race of status, salaries, designations, or other academic clouts which have become the bane of our places of high education today.

4. (a) Nature of Institute The Think Tank should be a new kind of research centre having no teachers and no classes, where world's greatest scientists could gather to do research, but there should be no laboratories, no machines, no apparatus for doing experiments. It should be sort of an

'Intellectual Shanti Niketan'-almost a refuge, to which scholars could repair for any length of time and have their worldly needs taken care of by others. The usual length of stay could be six months to one year. The thinkers and scholars could work on the projects of their own choice at their own grace and have no further responsibility or accountability to anyone excepting that at the end of their stay, a one page original contribution to the think tank would be required to be given.

4. Nature of facilities for thinkers & scholars'

For ensuring, that, the scholars selected for generating ideas on above key area get suitable environment, the proposed Think Tank would be providing them most modern accommodation on the lines of the one given to the scholars of Princeton University. The accommodation for the scholars, would be sufficient not only for themselves but also for their spouses. To keep the scholars in touch with nature, suitable landscaping will be done by maintaining a garden, so that, while studying the chosen discipline, they also remain in communication with nature or Ultimate Reality. Initially, accommodation could be provided for 20 scholars. Besides that it will be necessary to provide adequate accommodation in a Guest House in the campus. The scholars selected to do research and generate new ideas will be at liberty to employ another scholar who may help them in their area of work. All the expenses of scholars will be borne by the Think Tank.

While there will have to be a big reference library, the scholars could be given mini reference libraries at their places of residence.

In the mini reference library, scholars will be having specialized books needed for their research and generating new ideas. A similar assistance will be given to scholars working in the same field in other institutes.

5. Key Areas for thinkers.

The immediate aim of the thinkers and scholars of Think Tank will be to take up following key areas for studying, analysing, thinking and throwing up new ideas for around growth and happiness of humanity in the 21st Century :

(i) Pure Learning

To begin with some thinkers and scholars would be required to dedicate themselves to generate new ideas or theories in the disciplines of their choice. To write these ideas/theories in simple, lucid style and in the language of the people will be direct contribution to the intellectual pool of the society. Engagement in this activity shall also act as the first step towards the generation of an atmosphere of pure learning in the Think Tank. This will also encourage human virtues like austerity, dignity and grace in persons directly or indirectly related with the Tank.

(ii) Encyclopaedia of Sri Gurm Granth Sahib

Preparation of an encyclopaedia of principles, concepts and precepts of Sri Guru Garth Sahib and their relevance to the society of 21st Century.

(iii) Concept of spiritual socialism & Root formula for welfare of Society

For ensuring around economic development and for developing a panacea to erradicate the ills of humanity, concepts of 'Spiritual Socialism' will be required to be developed by some thinkers & economists. They will have to give practical suggestions in this regard so that, the concepts of 'meditation on the name of God' (Naim Japna), 'honest livelihood'

(Dharam di Kirat Karna), and 'sharing the fruits of honest labour with needy persons' (Vand Ke Chhakna) become a way of life in 21st Century. The root formula for the welfare would be 'good of all' (Sarbat da bhala), 'Fatherhood of God' and 'Universal brotherhood'. In such a society, there will be no distinction on the basis of caste, creed, colour, race or sex and as there will be no superior or inferior races, the exploitation of one section of the society by another section will be totally absent.

(iv) New economic Model development of the Country.

As the human beings of the 21st Century, would be expected to live 'pure amidst impurities of the world' and they would be leading lives of house-holders without being materialist, economic development of the country will have to be made in such a fashion, that, it leads not only to optimum results but also helps the citizens to achieve self realisation or self actualisation. The thinkers of the Think Tank would be required to develop a new model of development for the country, which will help in vanishing the poverty, disease, unhappiness and usher in a veritable heaven on earth. The emphasis will be on generation of Self employment and opportunities, so that, gross national product grows at accelerated rate. The role of Govt. will be of honest umpire.

(v) Role & Status of Women in Society.

The thinkers and scholars will be required to enunciate in a lucid language the role and status of women in 21st Century. The women are most only to be treated as equal to men but they are to be respected for their role in bringing up next generation in accordance with spiritual

norms, so that, children could realise their optimum intellectual, physical, moral & spiritual capacity.

(vi) Investment in youth & children A community or a country can advance only if due moral, spiritual and material investment is made in its youth and children. The thinkers will be required to give new ideas for their alround development in the 21st Century, so that, later on they grow into responsible members/citizens of the society/ country.

(vii) Care of vulnerable sections of society. Children, women and senior citizens are vulnerable sections of the society. The scholars will be required to formulate a plan under which society not only looks after them but creates condition under which their potential is fully developed and utilised and leads to their happiness and satisfaction.

(viii) Interaction between Experience of age and energy & enthusiasm of youth. The scholars and thinkers will be required to indicate how experience of age and energy and enthusiasm of youth can be utilised for the betterment of society in 21st century.

(ix) Research on Music & Kirtan. The thinkers of the institute will be required to carry out studies and indicate, how Music and Kirtan are actually a highway for achieving truth and Godhood in the present age. The need and importance of studying classical ragas in which various hymns recorded in Sri Gura Granth Sahib, are required to be sung, would be clarified by the thinkers. A further research will be carried out for developing master plan by utilising the media of television, audio and visual cassettes,

wherein, not only the message of the hymns, would be conveyed to the public, but also, the need to learn classical ragas will be emphasised. Efforts will be made to train artists, who will not be merely professionals but will be believing in the high moral values reflected in the hymns sung by them in the kirtan.

(x) Development of Techniques for dissemination of ideas developed in the institute among the people i.e. Extension work New ways of holding seminars or great debates will be developed, so that, new ideas generated in the Think Tank could be discussed there by inviting not only the scholars of the Think Tank, but also experts on the same discipline from all over the world. Thereafter, great debates will be held twice in a year and the period of great debates or seminars may vary from 7 to 10 days. After such great debates or brain storming sessions, the ideas which will be emerging after discussion, would be presented to the public, so that, they could lead fully useful, successful and happy lives. The scholars and thinkers of the Think Tank will be required to develop techniques by which the ideas generated could be disseminated among the public by successfully using print media, electronic media, debate and discourse media and platform media.

(xi) Translation of Classics The scholars of the Think Tank will be required to translate selected classics in modern languages by using modern idiom, so that, messages contained in the classics, could be conveyed to the public at large. This activity of the Think Tank will be able to usher in renaissance.

The new, positive and creative thoughts generated by the Think Tank would be like a small lamp trying to illuminate the dark world till the sun of 'Universal Brotherhood' & 'Fatherhood of God' rises in the East and spreads its rays of bliss in the hearts of humanity.

‘Prerna’

—A small Step Towards ‘Spiritual Socialism’

Concept of Spiritual Socialism The Almighty ‘Waheguru’ revealed to Guru Nanak, that, before the beginning of time and space, only He was in existence and was meditating in “Sunya Samadhi” (nothingness) and when thought to create came in ‘His Sublime Mind’, the multi-dimensional Universe came into existence with a big bang and instantly thereafter various planets got inhabited by living beings belonging to plant and animal kingdoms. The relationship between God and His creation is like the relationship between a dancer and dance and, that is why ancient rishis and sages have visualised God as Natraj. The highest form of creation was of Man who possessed not only soul but also intellect and was made capable of realising the truth, that, there is only ‘One God’ and all human beings are His children and can attain ‘perfect happiness’ (‘Anand’) by utmost submission to ‘His Will’ (i. e. ‘Hukam’). The expected behaviour of human beings is ‘Nam Japna’ (Meditation on One God), ‘Dharam di Kirat’ (Honest Labour) and ‘Vand Chhakna’ (Sharing with the needy) and this behaviour would be helping in establishing Spiritual Socialism on planet Earth.

Prerna a step towards Spiritual Socialism, 2. Taking a cue from above revealed truth, a group of women realised, that, best service to Him is service to humanity and any person helping and serving needy and suffering humanity

not only serves Him but also realises/acquires salvation (moksh). Accordingly an organisation under the banner "Prerna" was formed with headquarters at Amritsar on 24th March, 1992 and it was got registered under the Trust Act and Income tax Act.

Identification of target groups needing help. 3. Applying the teachings of the Guru to the prevalent social conditions in India, following three target groups needing help have been identified by Prerna :

Destitute Women (a) Women are more vulnerable than men to the adversities of life arising out of economic, social, psychological and environmental situations. Young and old widows, unmarried mothers, victims of kidnapping could become unwanted and destitute. Prolonged illness of bread earner or his being jailed for a crime and desertion by husbands could be other reasons for women to become destitute and helpless. But the message is clear, that, it is necessary to organise services for such women and equip them with skills in a short span of time, so that, they could rehabilitate themselves. In this process, their basic physical needs have to be looked after. Although the number of such women are legion, but, it is necessary to make a beginning, even if only a very small part of them can be helped to stand on their feet

Orphans (b) According to Rabindra Nath Tagore, 'every new born child comes with a message, that, God has yet not lost hope in mankind'. When this divine and celestial messenger loses his earthly parents, then, it becomes the duty of the society to help the child realise its full spiritual, physical and intellectual potential by

Old People

creating healthy, happy and loving environment.

(c) Due to break up of joint families, triumph of individualism and the pressure generated by high cost of living, old people are gradually becoming destitute and unwanted by the children for whom they had sacrificed their youth and working life. It is the duty of the society to create happy, healthy environment where the senior citizens could feel, that, they are still useful citizens and are loved, cared and needed by the society.

Establishment of 3-in-1 institution the Only Solution.

4. For solving the problems of three vulnerable sections of the society, indicated above, it is felt, that, an institution called Prerna Village and Homes, should be established, where, destitute women, children and senior citizens could live in close loving and useful partnership and thereby bring sea change in the life style of unfortunate members of the society.

What is a Prerna Village & Home

5. Depending on the availability of resources, a Prerna Village and Home could be either a multistoreyed building or a cluster of cottages with infrastructure facility, like parks, swimming pool, gymnasium, play ground and hospital etc. Each cottage or dwelling unit in the multistoreyed building would serve as a home for 6 to 8 children under the loving care of a mother, who could be a childless widow or a spinster. In this loving environment children would be having normal family atmosphere and could get education in suitable good schools and colleges, so that, they may be in a position to compete at par with other children living with their own parents. Besides that, a few senior citizens would be staying in the 'Home' who

would be helping in the management and would act as loving grand-parents of the children. The other women, who cannot act as model mothers for the children, could also help in maintenance of various facilities in the 'Home' and they could be given suitable training in crafts, so that, they can become self reliant, financially independent and useful members of the society. Thus, 'Prerna Village & Prerna Home' would be providing 'three-in-one' facilities to vulnerable sections of the society.

Various steps in the journey of thousand miles.

6. According to the great Chinese Sage Confucious, a journey of thousand miles starts by taking one step. Prerna has taken following steps in its journey towards the final destination of establishing 'three-in-one' facilities for vulnerable women, children and senior citizens :

(a) Distribution of sweaters, cardigans clothes, shoes with socks to poor children studying in village schools.

(b) Running four Homoeopathic Hospitals where fully qualified doctors are giving free treatment and medicines to the patients. More than thousand patients are treated monthly and provided free medicines and guidance.

(c) Running three Training Centres for girls, where poor girls are trained in the arts of sewing, stitching, embroidery, food preservation, cooking and beauty care. Separate literacy classes are also held for illiterate women and girls. To encourage reading habit, books are issued from mini library maintained at the Centres.

(d) Distribution of 130 sewing machines, 175 blankets to widows and women having no

earning male member after the great flood of July-August, 1993.

(e) Medical camps are held in villages, colonies & schools where free medicines and treatment is given to patients by a team of volunteer doctors. Atleast three free medical camps are held every month.

(f) Involving public school children in slum clearance, spread of literacy, teaching the role of food nutrition in maintenance of good health, tree plantation for improving environment and eradicating all types of pollutions.

(g) For improving the quality of life in slums, a colony has been adopted and efforts are being made to improve social, moral, physical, intellectual and general environment.

Proposal to establish a polytechnic for Women

7. Prerna, being an organisation of women, is considering a proposal to establish a polytechnic for women, where young women could be trained in some disciplines, so that, they could become self reliant and avoid becoming destitute. Initially, the polytechnic would be having following departments :

**(A) Deptt. of Fashion Designing
(Establishment of Small Business in
Textiles)**

- i) Cutting & Tailoring
- ii) Fashion designing
- iii) Embroidery, patch work etc.
- iv) Boutique establishment, marketing of garments within the country or abroad by individual/Cooperative effort.

(B) Beauty Culture

- i) Human body being God's temple-its proper maintenance with external aids
- ii) Enhancing natural beauty by proper nutrition, meditation, exercise and truthful living amidst the impurities of world and environment.
- iii) Proper grooming of the ladies.
- iv) How to open beauty clinics to impart the above knowledge.

(C) Deptt. of Secretarial Practice

Preparing the ladies for office work
(Minimum qualification XII std.)

- i) Shorthand and typing
- ii) Improving knowledge of Commercial English.
- iii) Secretarial Practice
- iv) Receptionist-cum-PBX Operator
- v) English Speaking
- vi) Computer Awareness

(D) Deptt. of Home Management

(E) Deptt. of Food Preservation

- i) Theory and need for food preservation.
- ii) Bottling and Canning
- iii) Marketing of the products

The manner in which the polytechnic would become operational, is indicated in the following paragraphs :

Faculty & Staff Initially a dedicated team of four to five teachers who are paid reasonably well would be required.

Besides that, a clerk-cum-typist would be required. 2-3 Group 'D' staff would be essential for helping the teachers and running the office. The faculty will be growing in number with the passage of time and expansion of polytechnic.

**Target groups
& Charging of
fees.**

Fifty percent students would be from poor and lower middle class families who will be given 50 to 60% fee concession. A few sponsored students will also be on rolls.

**Fixed
Investment**

i) Building : Minimum two acres of land would be required. Initially six to seven rooms with bath rooms, staff room, office etc., will be required. Future expansion will be by adding floors vertically.

ii) Equipments for various courses and furniture for students, teachers and office. telephone, fans etc. would be required to be installed.

**Working
Capital**

Salaries for the staff, electricity, water, telephone, stationery and other office expenditure. Maintenance and repairs of the buildings, equipment, furniture etc.

Funding

Funds would be required for capital investment and running the institute.

Sources of funds :

- i) Donations-entitled to deduction u/s 80-G of income Tax Act.
- ii) Grants-in-aid from some companies, business and other institutions.
- iii) Fees paid by students.
- iv) Profit on sale of products.
- v) Charitably inclined persons will be

requested to sponsor construction of rooms and those rooms/blocks will be named after them.

- vi) Persons will be requested to sponsor specific departments and their contribution will be acknowledged by mentioning in brackets "Sponsored by.....".
- vii) People will be encouraged to sponsor the education of specific students by contributing in lump sum i.e. monthly, quarterly etc.
- viii) Group of industries or associations will be encouraged to contribute funds for opening departments in specific disciplines so that institution may be in a position to supply skilled/semi-skilled work force.
- ix) Hostel for girls from rural areas could be constructed and maintained by specific donors.
- x) Advertisements in Souvenirs to be published by the Polytechnic.
- xi) Non-residents to be encouraged to contribute either in the fixed investment or in the working capital.

8. As the inspiration to 'establish 'Prerna' has come from divine sources, it is hoped that, it will prove to be a firm step toward the journey to establish Spiritual Socialism on our planet. As for as funding of various projects is concerned, a reference to a true story will not be out of place. A Christian lady Saint got an inspiration to establish a Cathedral in a remote

village and when people asked her how much money she is having for the project, she replied 'a penny'. At this reply, people laughed but the saint replied that she has got a penny plus God who is source of all wealth. Due to grace of God, that Cathedral was built and similarly proposed steps toward Spiritual Socialism will also be successful.

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